

Political Dynamics that Rooted the Boko Haram Insurgency and Impediments against its fight in Nigeria

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Abstract

Boko Haram insurgency has become a major security issue confronting Nigerian state since 2009. Seismic damages have been done over the years in respect of lives and properties. Indeed, socio-political stability and economic life of the country has been negatively touched owing to persistence insurgency. This study investigates political dynamics in Nigeria that are rooted the Boko Haram Insurgency as well as examines the contextual stances that obstructed successful fight against the Insurgency in Nigeria. Qualitative method of inquiry was adopted, as secondary data were analysed. This study found that political failure, religious fragmentation and dashed hope (expectations) in Northern Nigeria are the root courses of Boko Haram insurgency. These tripod variables metastasized in form of: fraudulent elections, corruption, inequality, instrument of violence and impunity and politics of Shari'a Law adoption and its implementation. Also this study identified: Bad governance, perceived political affiliation, mineral exploration and exploitation, missing political framework, lack of sophisticated equipment/corruption and uncoordinated/division among the military hierarchy as major impediments obstructing the successful fight against the insurgency in Nigeria. Prioritization of good governance, de-politicization of sensitive religious issues, government proactiveness and responsiveness to religiously garmented matters and fulfillment of promises made by the Northern political leaders are some recommendations offered by this study. This became necessary owing to the fragility and the need for peace, stability and development of not only the Northern region but Nigeria as a whole.

Keywords: Political dynamics, Boko Haram, Insurgency, Shari'a Law and Religious fragmentation

Introduction

One of the greatest challenges in every political community is security. Government's presence is largely felt from adequate provision of adequate security for the life and property. Security is the top-most priority of every responsible government. Chief among the factors that generate insecurity in the society is an attempting to forcefully change the prevailing political order. The above narrative gives credence to the activity of Boko Haram in Nigeria. At time feelings of dissatisfaction and passionate contemplation, influence the desire for change in the political or social order. In this case, Ideology plays a significant role. And if this belief system (ideology) is soaked in religious doctrines, if subjectively manipulated, not carefully managed, and radically used, it may generate conflict and insecurity. Regrettably, since her independence in 1960, if not the ravaged 1970s civil war, Nigeria has not witness serious and devastated security challenge like inflicted Boko Haram radical campaign. Boko Haram based its message of forceful change

of Nigerian political order on religious ideology. The unprecedented and wanton destruction of life and property would continue to linger in the memory of a nation that is still yearning for development. Indeed, the historical experience of Nigerian would ever remain incomplete without underscoring the negative impacts of Boko Haram insurgency in the country.

As captured in Mustapha and Meagher, (2020: 1) more than 27,000 lives were loss, 2 million people displaced and an estimated \$17 billion infrastructural/economic damages were recorded as at year 2020. According to UNDP report, as at the end of 2020, the conflict in the North-east will have resulted in nearly 350,000 deaths, with 314,000 of those from indirect causes (Sannin, 2021). Financially, Over \$1bn Spent On Weaponry to Recover Territories From Boko Haram – Buhari. This is huge for a country lagging in poverty, unemployment and infrastructure deficit. Boko Haram is a religious movement with distinct ideological campaign for a change in political order. However, the destruction caused by this colonial rule in Muslim areas of northern Nigeria played a significant role in shaping the group's views on Western education and modernity. This deep-rooted historical aversion to European influences (foreign techniques of governance) has combined with the reawakening, consciousness of Islamic movements (more importantly the rise of Salafi and Wahhabi) influences to create a distinctly violent jihadi group (Khalid, 2021).

Put differently, perceiving Boko Haram as a product of locally based dynamic relationship between religion and politics concerns this study. That is, this paper seeks to probe the complex but necessary and ever changing interactions between religion and politics in Nigeria which gave birth to Boko Haram, it reactive and adaptive characters. Argued was Thurston, (2018:37) that revolutionary understanding of Islam by Boko Haram leaders (Yusuf and Shekau) reflected the context of political failures, religious fragmentation, and dashed expectations in Northeastern Nigeria. It is against this background that this paper shall examine the political dynamics in Nigeria that are the roots of the Boko Haram insurgency. Also, this study shall x-ray political dynamics that have obstructed successful fight against the Insurgency in Nigeria. Structurally, there is an introduction, conceptual clarification, theoretical framework, Political Dynamics that influence the emergence of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria, Political Dynamics that obstructed successful fight against the Insurgency in Nigeria, Unaddressed Insurgency in the North: A threat to Nigerian Political Stability, Conclusion and recommendations

Theoretical Framework

As a tool of analysis, this study considered the Islamization Agenda theory as well as the Frustration and Aggression theory as theoretical framework that adequately provided an insight into the root causes of Boko Haram insurgence and problems militating against its fight in Nigeria.

The Islamization Agenda Theory

This is the most common theory associated with the sect. It begins with the very etymological concept of the term 'Boko Haram' which translate to mean 'western education is sinful' and whose objective seeks to establish a 'pure' Islamic state ruled by sharia law. this thesis was subject of critic owing to the position of the Nigerian federal constitution that forbids any state to adopt any religion as state religion, as at early 2000, nine northern states (including Borno, Yobe and Adamawa) and three others (in some parts with large Muslim population) have adopted Sharia as a state religion and had become part of the legal system. The survival of Islam is therefore not threatened and has never been threatened to the extent that a guarantee was needed

for a peaceful co-existence. Whatever the case may be, Islamization Agenda theory remains a formidable force people believe is responsible for the uprising.

Another version of this theory accuses a former military head of upgrading Nigeria's membership in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to full-fledged membership. Theorists argue that such membership comes with certain dubious responsibility, such as supporting certain World Islamic agendas (including secret Islamic terrorist covets operations). Renouncing such membership or failing to meet up certain responsibility often comes with a price; terrorism becomes the price to Nigeria in this case.

Frustration and Aggression theory

This thesis was developed 1939 by was introduced by a group of psychologists from Yale University including—John Dollard, Leonard Doob, Neal Miller, O.H. Mowrer, and Robert Sear. Dollard and his colleagues believed that their account of frustration and aggression was valid for human as well as nonhuman (i.e., animal) actors and for groups as well as individuals. That is, one should expect aggressive inclinations to result whenever a person or animal experiences frustration. Frustration might lead to many different responses, only one of which is aggression. Whereas the original formulation explained the lack of overt aggressive behaviour in certain situations in terms of inhibition due to the fear of punishment (which would not diminish the aggressive drive), a subsequent version of the hypothesis made clear that some responses to frustration (e.g., vigorous exercise) could reduce the invoked aggressive response.

In some cases, aggression naturally takes the form of retaliation against the initial source of frustration. In other cases, situational constraints can prevent a person from being able to react against the actual source of frustration (such as when the frustration was caused by a very powerful person or group Mentovich and Jost, (2017). In some cases, aggression naturally takes the form of retaliation against the initial source of frustration. In other cases, situational constraints can prevent a person from being able to react against the actual source of frustration. (such as when the frustration was caused by a very powerful person or group). This theory was criticized for rigidity and overgeneralization. Meaning, there is need to limit the scope of aggression to hostile forms in which actor's goal is to inflict harm and not instrumental forms of aggression in which aggression is simply a means to attain other goals (such as control, domination). Despite the criticism leveled against this theory, this thesis is relevant to our understanding of Boko Haram's response to the prevailing social order in Nigeria.

Apart from the above two different perspectives to the existence of this sect, various factors were raised by scholars in the literature in respect of the causes of Boko Haram in Nigeria. According to MCcants, religious heritage that lands fighting abroad to establish states and to protect one's fellow muslims; ultraconservative religious ideas and networks exploited by militant recruiters; peer pressure (if you know someone involved your'e likely to get involve); fear of religious persecution; poor governance; youth unemployment or underemployment in large cities and civil war. Indeed, Thurston, (2018) added 'politics' to this, while he argued that Jihadist movement are political actors who believe strongly that political developments can enable or constrain their activities. Mustapha, (2014) highlights five factors that are roots cause of Boko Haram in Nigeria. These are: religious doctrine, poverty and inequality; post 1999 politics, youth agency and geography. In this study, attention shall be on the interactions between religion and politics.

Political Dynamics that influenced the emergence of Boko Haram Insurgency in Nigeria

The history of Boko Haram cannot be disentangled from the immense political change Nigeria experienced during the 1999 transition to democracy.

Plato and Aristotle placed political stability and change at the very centre of their theories.... Reflecting on the political development as it was formulated in the enlightenment, change was seen as inevitably progressive as political institutions became more congruent with man's nature as a reasoning, choosing being with inalienable rights (Almond, 1963).

Broadly, after decades of vacillating between periods of military rule and democracy, punctuated by coups, the Nigerian Fourth Republic began as General Abdusalami Abubakar peacefully handed over power to Olusegun Obasanjo after democratic elections. The 1999 Constitution was modeled after the Second Republic's Constitution (1979–1983), which favors a majoritarian political system of federalism similar to that of the United States. The transition to democracy in 1999 suggests a system of political arrangement where rights, liberty and freedom of association were guaranteed. Acting on these values, different groups and associations that are politically, ethnically, religiously and regionally based began to spring up. Among these identity groups are: Political parties (All people's Party APP later changed to ANPP, People's Democratic Party PDP and Alliance for Democracy AD), the Oodua People's Congress (OPC) led by Dr. Frederick Fasehun, and the splitter OPC group led by Ganiyu Adams, Arewa People's Congress (APC) led by Alhaji Sagir Mohammed, Movement for the Actualization of the Sovereign State of Biafra (MASSOB) led by Chief Ralph Uwazurike, Ijaw Youth Council (IYC) led by Felix Tuodolo and later by Asari Dokubo, Jamā'at Ahl as-Sunnah lid-Da'wah wa'l-Jihād' (Boko Haram) led by Mohammed Yusuf and later Abubakar Shekau, etc.

Leveraged on the '*concurrent list*' principle that accompanied the 1999 constitution, federalism and presidential democracy, states in Nigeria attempted to test their authority within their boundaries. Hence, issues, events and activities that are political in nature have influenced the emergence of Boko Haram in Nigeria. Indeed, fraudulent elections; pervasive corruption; severe inequality, violence and impunity that characterized authority's approach to conflict Management and more importantly, politics of shari'a institutionalization and implementation.

Nigerian Fourth Republic Political Climate and Radical Jihadism

Fraudulent Elections: Until 2015 general elections which was described as credible and fair owing to reform initiative in 2010, previously conducted elections in Nigeria were not merely highly contested, but sometimes blatantly fraudulent. Between 1999 when Nigeria returned to democratic rule and 2015 politics remains highly competitive, Peoples' Democratic Party PDP held the presidency and often controlled majority of legislative seats and state government. Gubernatorial elections often hard fought with huge sum of money. Governors and political godfathers sometimes recruit youth and criminals to harass voters as well as perceived opponents.

Indeed, it is elucidative that, the 2003 governorship election in Borno state was a key event and very strategic to the understanding of the radicalism of Boko Haram group. As captured in Thurston, (2018:27-28), 2023 gubernatorial election in Borno state was key event in the

empowerment of Muhamad Yusuf (the Leader of Boko Haram), it was part of a larger trend where godfather recruited unsavory actors to help them take power and later turned on these allies. The 'used and dump' strategy of some politicians has greavious implication on the security and stability of his geo-political constituency. This regrettably played out in 2023 in Borno state.

Corruption: This is widely seen by Nigerians as their country's biggest problem. In 2006, former Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) Mallam Nuhu Ribadu estimated that some \$380 billion had been 'stolen or wasted' since independence in 1960. Ten years later, the minister of information Alhaji Lai Muhamed alleged that \$9 billion had been lost to corruption just during the 2010-2015 tenure of Goodluck Jonather, including \$ 2. 1 billion purported stolen from funds allocated for fighting Boko Haram (Faul, 2016). Corruption is everywhere and highly pervasive. Corruption has become part of Nigerian political flesh. To think of corruption is to think of Nigeria, in fact, this ugly phenomenon has created resentment among many citizens and weakens the state's ability to respond accordingly to security issues. The character of political elites toward financial discipline in the Nigeria Fourth Republic is worrisome. This has formed a basis for utter dissatisfaction of some citizen with Democracy, and by extension began to act and react dangerously negatively to the state, believing that the system needs to be changed. It is hard to divorce the pervasive corruption in Nigeria from the feelings expressed by various radical movements in Nigeria, Boko Haram inclusive.

Inequality: In the year 2014 and 2015, Nigerian economy was one of the fastest growing in the world. Temporarily, the country was Africa's largest economy and world's twenty-six (26) largest economy with Gross Domestic Product GPD of nearly \$5510 Billion Yet, population growth from 89 million in 1991 to over 140 million in 2006 to more than 180 million in 2016. It has outpaced economic growth. Indeed, as at 2016, 43% of the population was under the age of fifteen years another 19% under the age of twenty-five (United States Central Intelligence Agency world fact book). Despite this hearth-catching statistical understanding, the economic growth has been mostly jobless. The achieved economic growth during this era was not translates to economic development. Sadly, people hardly felt the impact of the economic positively on their life. It was evident that poverty; unemployment, hunger, starvation characterized the society. This suggests that, by then government economic policies featured were not according focus on poverty reduction, job creation and income generation (Usman, 2016).

The result is that most Nigerians are poor. According to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) as reported by the premium Times newspaper, 133 Million Nigerian (representing 63% of the nation's population) living in poverty (Izuaka, 2022). More than 60% live on less than 1Dollar per day, while official unemployment stood at 5.0% (NBS, 2024). According to Thurston, (ibid), if Nigerian Economy looks deeply unfair at the national level, it looks even worse in the north. Agriculture which is the major employer of labour in the immediate postcolonial was neglected following the discovery of oil in its abundant in the 1970s (oil boom). The poverty rate in the North East in particular rose from 35.65 to 72.4% between 1980s--2006 (ibid). Consequently, youth were struggling to cope as they are jobless. This coincides with the gradual loss of power of surveillance and control by the traditional rulers. This hopeless (*growing distrust in political leadership*) context creates among the youth a deep feeling of

dissatisfaction and disappointment and hatred against the elites and by extension set a pace for activism and Islamic radicalism.

Instrument of violence and impunity: The manner of managing conflict by the constituted authority at time is condemnable. When rebellions occur, Nigerian authorities pursue it and haphazardly used maximum force to have it resolved. Quickly, they deployed the military and rarely appreciate the principle of reconciliation. This approach to conflict management has over the years left grievances unresolved. Boko Haram arose partly because of the Nigeria's government failure to effectively address past incidents of inter-religious violence and the prolong of the Boko Haram conflict owes much to the widespread human rights abuses committed by the security forces against actual suspected sect members (ibid). The manner in which authorities politicized and handled conflicts in the past (Zangon-Kataf in Kaduna; Hausa Fulani clashes with Christian ethnic group in Jos and Tafawa Balewa in Bauchi) were frequently heard in Yusuf and Shekau's preaching. This attests to their dissatisfaction with the leaders and the entire political system.

Politics of Shari'a Law Adoption and Implementation: The arrival of a new train of democratic rule in 1999 and rise of Shari'a politics in Northern Nigeria provided a fertile ground for Muslim activists to retread the relationship between politics and Islam particularly in the Northern Nigeria. The struggle for sharia implementation since independence has factionalized the political elites into pro- and anti-sharia groups. Being that the pro-sharia group is predominantly from northern Nigeria, different groups identifying with the implementation of sharia began to emerge. Evidently, At an Islamic seminar in Kaduna, former President Muhammadu Buhari was reported to have said that: "I will continue to show openly and inside me the total commitment to the Sharia movement that is sweeping all over Nigeria... God willing we will not stop the agitation for the total implementation of the Sharia in the country." (Akhaine, 2001).

Buhari stated that the spread of Sharia is 'a legal responsibility which God has given us, within the context of one Nigeria to continue to uphold the practice of Sharia wholeheartedly and to educate non-Muslims, what remains for Muslims in Nigeria is for them to redouble their efforts, educate Muslims on the need to promote the full implementation of Sharia law (Agbibo n.d).

For this thought on Shari'a coming from an important figure like Buhari, it is a morale booster to the Muslim activists).

Nigerian states many in the Muslim community envisioned this as a panacea for the complex and messy problems of social injustice, poverty, unemployment and political corruption. However, after the expansion of Sharia the unchanged circumstances of many who had celebrated its signing created even more anger and disaffection towards the state governments that had adopted the new laws. The disappointment with the implementation of Sharia opened up the North's social space for extreme religious ideologies to be seeded and for older strands of radical Islamism to be revived. Yet conservative politicians at the state level argue that it is the Islamic law (God-made) that must override the Nigerian Constitution (man-made), not the other way round. Also insightful was Adesoji who argues that, the adoption of the Sharia appeared to be an effort to pacify a section of Muslims (the conservatives) who had consistently agitated against the secular nature of the country and who perhaps were seen either as a threat to the

tenure of the political office-holders or as a support base that could not be neglected on the basis of political calculation. The conservatives insist on a unitary view of society that recognizes no difference between state and religion, and they advocate making Nigeria an Islamic state administered according to the principles of Sharia Law. All Muslims belong to the “Umma” (Community), and the idea of a secular state is atheistic. However, this view does not enjoy popular support among ‘Liberal Muslims’ who insist that such an interpretation does not entail Islamizing Nigeria nor does it translate to the rejection of the constitutional provisions of the secularity of the Nigerian state. Furthermore, between 1999 and 2001, twelve (12) Northern states moved to implement full ‘Shari’a law’. To this end, state governments expanded the power of existing Shari’a courts, as they gave them the power to hear criminal cases for instance issue of alimony (court ordered support after separation). It is against this complex and turbulent background that Jama’at al-sunna li-da’wa wa-l-jihad emerged.

The campaign to expand Shari’a was a mainstream one; Shari’a implementation was led by politicians who belong to major non-Islamist political parties. The effort drew support from diverse constituencies, including Sufis, salafis and unaffiliated Muslims. A group Izala movement has claimed credit for been the driving force behind Shari’a implementation. But Jafar Adam worried that the new system would empower Sufis and charlatans. Jafar portrayed Shari’a implementation as a moral test for Northern Nigeria’s muslim community, and especially salafis who he hope would guide the program. Izala group at times accepted appointment from the government. Meanwhile Jafar continue to be skeptical about the capacity of democracy and secularism to facilitate a moral purification of muslim society. Yusuf would amplify, especially after his own career as a political preacher challenged.

Scenario in Borno state politically helped create conditions that made the leader of Boko Haram (Yusuf) brand of salafi skepticism about Shari’a particularly resonant. Upon returned to democratic rule in 1999 Mala Kachalla of All People’s Party (later renamed All Nigerian People’s Party (ANPP) won election as Governor of Borno. He found much of his single term dominated by Shari’a politics. After the wave of Shari’a implementation in Zamfara state in October 1999, Shari’a implementation provides highly popular with northern Nigerian Muslims. Governors like Kachalla found themselves compelled to ask. Moreover, at this particular point in time, the Borno’s education system was failing and promoting unemployed, Muslim elites were promoting Shari’a as the key to societal and moral transformation.

In 2003, Shari’a was a major issue in gubernatorial contest in Northern Nigeria, because the incumbent want to win using its advantage of incumbency, but also because of their handling of Shari’a. At the end, some incumbents benefited because of their strong affirmations of commitment to the implementation of Shari’a while others benefited from their skillful balancing act. Indeed, three (3) governors in Northern Shari’a states lost their elections including Kachalla.

Instructively, the coming to power (election) of the former governor of Borno state Alimodu Sheriff was a turning point for Boko Haram in Nigeria. As narrated by Thurston, (2018:129), sheriff’s government gave Yusuf a political prominence. In his bid to win election, sheriff likely made an agreement with Yusuf, he would intensify application of Shari’a in the state and bring Yusuf’s movement into his government if Yusuf would support his campaign and portray Khacalla as weak on Sharia. After his emergency as a governor, Sheriff in September 2005 established a ministry of Religious Affairs and Special Education, with the responsibility for some aspects of Shari’a administration and preaching. This ministry was the first of its kind in

the country. An associate of Yusuf who is also his financier Buji Foi was appointed as a commissioner. In addition, Yusuf was a member of the Supreme Council for Shari'a in Nigeria. It is acknowledged that Sheriff was and is a major financier of the group. He pays for young men to go for lesser hajj (Mustapha, 2014: 165)

In the build up to the 2007 general elections, Sheriff romanced with the central government and used his power of incumbency to achieve his re-election bid. Suggesting, he counts less on Yusuf's support to win his election. In 2007, Buji Foi resigned from Sheriff's government on alleged that Sheriff failed to abide by the deal with Yusuf. At this point, Yusuf's relations with authorities became deteriorated and perceived Sheriff as a traitor. Hence, Yusuf decided that when his members were arrested he would attempt to free them by force. In April 2007 hundred of Yusuf's group attacked a police station in Kano, which provoked military campaign against

Political Dynamics that obstructed successful fight against the Insurgency in Nigeria

Bad governance: The nature and character of government in place as regards responsibility consciousness and delivery of good governance has made the fight against insurgency more difficult. Finding revealed that it is not that people in the north-east sympathise with Boko Haram and its splinter group, the Islamic State's West Africa Province, but that neglect from the authorities and desperation often drive people into the hands of the militants. According to Khalid, (2021), lack of good governance that leaves the population impoverished, frustrated and uneducated as "one huge root cause. This, Khalid belief was the root of the authorities' failure.

In its military efforts to root out Boko Haram in the northeast, the federal government is losing sight of the fact that the group is decidedly local, with the region being the group's operational priority despite its avowed wider regional or national ambitions of establishing an Islamic state. Arguably, the connectedness of today's globalized world has allowed local extremists like Boko Haram to graft themselves onto universalized debates on Muslim resistance to domination through Jihad in order to puff up their otherwise local profile. The manner in which President Jonathan's administration has responded to the insurgency has contributed to strengthening a narrative around injustice that is undercutting its overall aims.

Particularly as top army officers and the president continue to dismiss allegations of attacks on civilians despite credible evidence to the contrary, adding to the justice deficit in the northeast. In the worse-hit villages and towns of the northeast, the impact of the security response on communities has contributed to feelings of being 'under attack', and to civilians thinking they are being 'held responsible' for the actions of Boko Haram. The security failings of the military are not solely due to laxity. Other causes include low morale, poor intelligence and training, institutionalized corruption and the lack of necessary hardware despite Nigeria's vast security budget. Federal military spending has been considerably boosted in the past three years and stands at \$6.25 billion for 2014. Many analysts argue that a significant proportion of this money remains in the hands of top military officials or is distributed among a growing number of defence and security contractors. The federal government's dwindling political traction in the northeast and its limited legitimacy with local communities in the area will directly determine the success of its new 'soft approach' to counter-terrorism, unveiled in a March speech by Sambo Dasuki, the national security adviser.

Perceived Political Affiliation

It has been contested severally by many, the possibility of some nexus between political elites and the unending operation of Boko Haram terrorist group, despite fighting the sect for years and victory hasn't been achieved. At many times has it been debated, the possibility of the interplay of politics and terrorism in Nigeria. Allegedly, some political figures of northern origin have been accused of sponsoring the sect. It's on the debated topic of neutrality of the government in the continued existence of Boko Haram that Siollun (2014) argues that it could be naive to conclude that this kidnap happened in a vacuum, or that the Boko Haram has no connection to the powers that be in Nigeria's Game of Thrones-style politics. Spikes in violence and insecurity took place on a suspiciously recurring basis in the 12-18 months preceding Nigerian presidential elections: the next election is scheduled for 2015. In 2012, a senior member, Kabiru Sokoto, was found in a state governor's house after escaping from police captivity. The year before, a Nigerian senator was arrested on suspicion of aiding the group after claims that he telephoned a militant more than 70 times in one month.

Mineral Exploration and Exploitation

A former Director of the Presidential Campaign Council of the ruling All Progressives Congress, Hajia Naja'atu Mohammed, has fired her former party alleging that its vice presidential candidate, Kashim Shettima is a sponsor of terrorism. The former APC chieftain said this during a television interview on Arise Television. She further revealed that a notorious terrorist, Kabiru Sokoto, was back then found and arrested in the home of the former Borno State governor turned vice presidential candidate. Naja'atu alleged that the Vice Presidential candidate, Kassim Shettima of complicity in terrorism. Continuing the former APC director said mineral exploitation was at the heart of terrorism in the country, particularly in the North, saying that terrorism and banditry is a multi-billion dollar industry. She said even the soil in Zamfara is being illegally exploited as it contains strategic minerals, as well as the blue diamonds in the North-East and gold from Zamfara. She further alleged that some powerful people in the country, including some governors in conjunction with foreign mercenaries use banditry and terrorism to displace the people so they can comfortably mine these resources illegally.

Also, Rabiun Kwankaso argued that "the fighting in the North West and even the North East is mainly because of mineral resources, people are stealing it from Nigeria and outside Nigeria, including gold and other resources." as reported by (Punch Newspaper, 2023),

Missing Political Framework: Over the past two years, other programs aimed at rehabilitating basic services and addressing experiences of government neglect have nevertheless expanded across the Northeast. However, the incomplete return of local government and civil servants in many parts of Borno State has proven a significant challenge. In some LGAs, local government officials are back at headquarters, although with limited resources and capacity. In others, officials visit only periodically, but are still based in Maiduguri. In some places, donors have rebuilt public infrastructure such as schools, markets, and health facilities through cash-for-work interventions, but health workers and teachers have yet to return.¹⁰⁷ The primary reason for these delays is insecurity: as long as the military forces struggle to consolidate their gains and protect urban centers and rural outposts from attacks, government officials and civil servants are reluctant to return. The problem also extends to the police force. While the police have been ordered to redeploy to some recaptured towns, they have at various times resisted doing so,

arguing that they lack the necessary resources, equipment, and training (Brechenmacher, 2019:22)

Lack of Sophisticated Equipment and Corruption: There is the problem of inadequate and sophisticated weaponry, That is, security experts have argued that the military is ill-equipped. A security firm, Beacon Consulting, found that there were about 6.5 million small arms and light weapons in circulation in Nigeria but just 586,000 are in the hands of security forces.(Khalid, 2021). It is not the case that all of the remainder are being used by the Islamist militants, but the figures highlight that there are a huge amount of weapons available that are not in the military's control. According to Khalid, (2021), what we are seeing based on evidence is that these [armed] groups have a higher caliber of weapons, unfortunately, than the military". Military failed to get adequately equipped owing to corruption. Corruption pervaded military budget in Nigeria. As reported by Mustapha, (2014:165) the former Chief of Army Staff Lt-Gen. Azubuike Ihejirika: "you have a senior military officers who are benefiting from the insurgency because of the security budget. It pays them to keep insurgency going so that they can continue to make money."

Uncoordinated/ Division among the Military Hierarchy

It is a natural principle that a divided house is a defeated house. According to Helen, (2020), alone we can do so little; together we can do so much. One of the most pressing challenges undermining Nigeria's fight against insurgency, particularly in the Northeast, is the lack of coordination and internal division within the military hierarchy. When senior officers operate with conflicting strategies, poor communication, or personal rivalries, it creates a fragmented command structure that weakens operational effectiveness. These divisions can result in delays in decision-making, inconsistent execution of military plans, and a lack of synergy between various branches of the armed forces. In some cases, this disunity trickles down to the field level, leading to low morale among troops and a lack of trust in the leadership. Moreover, turf wars between different security agencies — such as the Army, Air Force, and intelligence units — further complicate joint operations, allowing insurgents like Boko Haram and ISWAP to exploit gaps in security coverage. Without a unified chain of command and a coordinated strategy, the efforts to dismantle insurgent networks remain disjointed and largely ineffective.

Unaddressed Insurgency in the North: A threat to Nigerian Political Stability

The deindustrialization of the north starting with the Structural Adjustment Programme of 1986 and the liberalization of the economy through the 1990s, which led to a flooding of Nigeria by cheap Asian textiles and other goods, local industries in the north, were thrust into an environment they were ill-equipped to compete in and this led to their end. Compounded by the challenges brought on by poor electricity supply and a deteriorating transport infrastructure, a large number of factories shut down in the early 2000s and hundreds of thousands of workers lost their jobs. The costs of power, water and maintenance of infrastructure rose rapidly for Nigeria's strategic non-oil industries in the north, and goods from overseas were simply more competitively priced. These factories, among a host of state-owned ventures established in the 1960s and 1970s, were part of a regional effort to close the economic gap between the north and south. According to a survey by the Kano Ministry of Commerce, in 2004 alone 48 of the 134 companies in the state collapsed. The collapse of the North's textile industry also decimated cotton production in the region, a key agricultural good that was farmed in 11 northern states.

Since 2000, the major state-owned businesses that have been lost in northern Nigeria have included the majority of the textile companies and New Nigeria Newspaper. Several sugar companies were privatized but eventually also went out of production. Bank of the North failed to meet the Central Bank directive for all banks to reach a capital base of \$15.3 million and was later assimilated into Unity Bank, a southern-based bank with a nationwide presence. The closure of Bank of the North signified the weakening of the region's stake in Nigeria's banking industry. This economic challenge of the North is a great impediment for the development of the whole (Nigeria) because, the northern state represent about 75% of the geography of the county.

Conclusion

Boko Haram is not a mere phenomenon in Nigeria, but unfortunately it has become a major Nigerian security challenge. This study comes to conclusion that, there is interplay between politics and religion and Islamic movement like Boko Haram explored to advance its principles. That is, jihadist trends developed localized doctrines that evolve through interactions with their environment. Put differently, Boko Haram benefited from existing but took advantage of important vacuums (fragmentation of sacred authority in Northern Nigeria). The history of Boko Haram cannot be disentangled from the major political change that characterized Nigerian state. More importantly, transition to democracy in 1999. The accompanied liberty, multi-party system, electoral process, freedom of association, constitutionalism and other values have shaped and influenced citizens' response to the prevailing political order. Indeed, perceived politicization of the adopted shari'a law and its implementation, unprincipled political recruitment and mobilization strategy, bad governance, election rigging, corruption and pervasive poverty and unemployment have created a fertile ground for the emergence of insurgency in Nigeria. Unfortunately, the fight against insurgency has been constrained with a number of factors. These include political affiliation, corruption, conspiracy, bad governance, lack of modern military equipment/ intelligence gathering and more importantly, uncoordinated/division among the military hierarchy. Hence, concerned authority should rise up to these challenges to have the country stabilized.

Recommendations

- i. Good governance is essential to peace and stability in Nigeria. Governments at all levels should deliver on their promises 'service delivery'. Vital issues such as poverty, illiteracy, high cost of living, must urgently be addressed. Campaign of government should be good governance. This would fan hope and repose peoples' confidence in the political leadership, reduces tension and stabilize the system.
- ii. This study is of the view that religion should be depoliticized because it is a sensitive issue that has made Nigeria fragile and ever prone to conflicts. That is, inevitable interactions of religion and politics must be handled with utmost care by the concerned authorities. Legal frameworks that discourage religious manipulation for personal and selfish political gains (such as **Sect 92. (1, 2 and 3a,-b of the 2022 Electoral Act)**) must be strengthened and duly enforced.
- iii. Government should be more proactive and responsive to issues that are religiously coloured. Government's conflict management strategy must be reviewed. Hasty judgments and extrajudicial killings would continue to trigger unmanageable crisis. This is evident from the gruesome murder of Boko Haram leader Mohammad Yusuf.

- iv. Northern Nigeria's political leaders, particularly the state governors, must move swiftly and strategically to deliver on repeated promises to invest in infrastructure, education and other social services, as well as encourage new sources of income for the region. Ultimately, the economy, security, stability and health of the north and south are intricately intertwined, and persistent violence and grinding poverty in any part of the country threaten the long-term progress of the whole.

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